

TESTIMONY OF ADMIRAL THOMAS BARRETT  
NOMINEE FOR THE POSITION OF ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PIPELINE  
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION  
FEBRUARY 7, 2006

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Co-Chairman, and other distinguished Members of the Committee,

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today with these other distinguished nominees as you consider my nomination to serve as the first Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration of the United States Department of Transportation. I am honored to have been nominated by President Bush for this important position and, if confirmed, look forward to joining Secretary Mineta and his superb leadership team at the Department. I commit to you that I will fully dedicate myself to helping ensure that PHMSA meets its vital safety obligations, working closely with you and your staff.

(With your permission, I would like to acknowledge my wife Sheila who is here with me today, and thank her for her support to me and to our nation, including as the mother of two sons who are Iraq combat veterans.)

PHMSA was established as a separate operating administration to improve the Department's oversight and regulation of pipeline safety and hazardous materials transportation. PHMSA administers comprehensive, nationwide programs designed to protect our communities from risks to life, health, property and the environment inherent in the commercial transportation of hazardous materials and the operation of America's natural gas and hazardous liquid transportation pipelines. PHMSA is directly focused on the elimination of transportation related deaths and injuries in hazardous materials and pipeline transportation, and toward developing transportation solutions that protect and enhance communities and safeguard the natural environment.

I believe my over 35 years of experience in the Coast Guard in a broad range of assignments has provided me the management, leadership and teamwork skills to succeed in the position for which I have been nominated. I believe my experience has given me an excellent perspective on how organizations and their personnel work, how to ensure focus on mission objectives and achieve the performance results that the administration, the Congress and the public expects.

Throughout my career I have delivered excellence across Coast Guard mission areas that included safety, security, environmental and resource protection, and training. During my tenure as Coast Guard Commander in Alaska I oversaw vessels and industrial systems associated with petroleum and hazardous materials transportation and partnered with state and federal agencies, tanker and terminal operators and citizen groups to improve systems quality assurance, safety and response capabilities for petroleum shipments in the

Port of Valdez and elsewhere in Alaska. I partnered with other agencies, the industry and the public to reduce the hazards inherent in fisheries activities, and reduce harmful discharges in Alaskan waters by leveraging technology, applying innovative regulatory approaches, and taking appropriate enforcement actions. Not the least of my risk management responsibilities included safely conducting Coast Guard operations in one of the most dangerous environments on the planet. I always promoted active communications and transparency with respect to agency actions. I have also unfortunately witnessed first hand the tragic consequences of safety failure on individuals, families, communities and the environment. I have attended too many funerals that need not have occurred. These experiences left indelible impressions on me and forged a resolve to do all in my power to prevent recurrences.

Mr. Chairman, I reiterate my commitment to you that, if confirmed, I will work as hard as I possibly can to carry out the very important responsibilities entrusted to me. Thank you.